

## Chapter III.

## Population.

## Villages.

that a stranger might easily pass them as a plot of bush and brushwood. The entrance generally leads through a ruined gate into a central street lined by houses of considerable size, showing signs of comfort, occasionally of wealth. The houses in the side rows, which run at right angles to the main street, are smaller and show fewer signs of comfort; and beyond these, generally outside of the village fence, is a fringe of huts of the lowest classes and the tents and booths of wanderers. Except the huts of *Mhārs*, which are often of bamboo and millet stalks, the walls of the houses are generally of sun-dried brick. In the rainier west most of the roofs are peaked and covered with overlapping semicircular tiles; in the drier east the roof is generally a flat mud terrace with a parapet. Almost every village has its temple or shrine and its holy tree. A few of the larger towns have walls and a tower, but most villages find their deep circle of thorn a complete shelter from robbers and wild animals.

## Houses.

According to the 1881 census, of 188,694 houses 154,806 or eighty per cent were occupied and 33,888 or eighteen per cent were empty. These figures give an average of forty-one houses to the square mile and of five inmates to each occupied house. <sup>1</sup> Except in the larger towns and occasionally in villages the houses are one-storeyed. The better class of house is built on a plinth, generally of dressed stone, rising three or four feet above the street. From the street a flight of two or three steps let into the plinth lead to the house-door. Of the veranda or *katti* on the top of the plinth on either side of the central steps one-half is generally open and the other half closed by bamboo matting. The veranda is covered by the eaves whose outer edge rests on a row of wooden pillars. Except as a waiting place for servants and beggars, and sometimes in playing games, the veranda is little used. The back of the veranda is the front wall of the house. This is pierced about the centre by a doorway about five feet high by three feet broad closed by a solid wooden door not unfrequently relieved by bosses of iron or other metal. On each side of the door a window about two feet square is generally guarded by heavy upright bars of wood let into the masonry. Some houses are built round a courtyard; others have no central open space. In houses with a central yard each of the four inner faces of the house has a room fronted by a low veranda. In houses without a central yard the rooms open into one another, and a central passage sometimes runs between the rooms from the front door to the back yard. In central yard houses the room between the street and the yard is used as a receiving room, by business men as an office, and by traders as their shop. When not in public use the women of the family sit in this room, and into it a dying member of the household is carried some days before his death. The central courtyard is known as *āngala* when open to the air, and as *padsāle* when roofed. There is sometimes no room between the front veranda and the *padsāle* or roofed court. Among the rooms, which surround the central court, are the *devār māne* or god-room, the cooking room, the sleeping room, and the

<sup>1</sup> Contributed by Mr. G. McCorkell, C. S.

eating or dining room. In some parts of the district the cook-room is also used as a bath-room. In other parts the bathing room is separate at the back of the house and is known as the *bachchala*. Among Lingáyats ornaments and other valuables are kept in a box in the god-room; Bráhmans and others keep them in a separate room answering to the strong-room of an English mansion, and in some instances they are kept in boxes in the sleeping rooms. Some houses have wells and every house has a well-like cistern to store rain water. The dwelling of any well-to-do family must have these rooms and conveniences. A rich man's house has more rooms. But even in the houses of the rich the rooms are low and dark. There are almost never side windows. The light comes from the front and back doors or where there is a central yard from the front door and the courtyard. The floors are of beaten earth covered with a wash of cowdung which is renewed every Monday, every new or full-moon day, and on most holidays. The dwellings of the poor have walls of mud and straw. The doors are of plaited or woven slips of bamboo. —As a rule they have only one or two rooms with a front veranda formed by the overhanging eaves. The poorest live in huts whose walls, except a few bamboos to bear the roof, are of woven millet stalks or palm leaves, sometimes but not always daubed with mud. There is little difference between town and village houses. The wealthier a man the better his house. He will have more rooms, but the arrangement will not be changed. The cost of building a first class house varies from £500 to £2000 (Rs. 5000-20,000); the ordinary labouring villager or townsman is content with a house costing £10 to £20 (Rs. 100-200); and a few shillings represent the cost of the poorest huts.

A wealthy man's house contains the following furniture: One to three *palangs* or cots varying in price from £1 10s. to £5 (Rs. 15-50), two or three cupboards each valued at 10s. to £2 (Rs. 5-20), a few chairs each worth 8s. to 10s. (Rs. 4-5), a few boxes each worth 10s. to £2 10s. (Rs. 5-25), carpets or *jáams* each worth 6s. to £3 (Rs. 3-30), bedding for each member of the family worth 10s. to £2 10s. (Rs. 5-25), and brass and copper water pots and cooking and dining vessels and dishes worth £20 to £30 (Rs. 200-300). A wealthy man will have ten to forty silver vessels used for dining and drinking and for show. As these silver vessels are chiefly for show and as a form of investment the number of them depends on the wealth and taste of the house-owner. It may be said that few families who are locally classed as rich, have less than £20 (Rs. 200) or more than £200 (Rs. 2000) invested in silver vessels; apart from these silver vessels a wealthy man's furniture varies in value from £50 to £100 (Rs. 500-1000); the furniture of a man in easy circumstances from £10 to £15 (Rs. 100-150); the furniture of a family in middling circumstances from £2 to £5 (Rs. 20-50); and a labourer's house gear, bed, matting, a brass pot or *lota*, and some earthen cooking vessels, is not worth more than £1 (Rs. 10).

Among men, except by a very few Bráhmans and by the highest class of Government servants, the broad flat-rimmed Bráhman turban is not used. In its place is worn a white cotton headscarf

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## Dress.